

# Parent's Guide



to the  
**Civil Air Patrol  
Cadet Program**



INTEGRITY • VOLUNTEER SERVICE • EXCELLENCE • RESPECT



## THE CADET OATH

*"I pledge to serve faithfully in the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program and that I will attend meetings regularly, participate actively in unit activities, obey my officers, wear my uniform properly and advance my education and training rapidly to prepare myself to be of service to my community, state and nation."*

# Welcome

---



*Thank you for supporting your son's or daughter's membership in the Civil Air Patrol's Cadet Program.*

*Through their experiences as CAP cadets, young people develop into responsible citizens and become tomorrow's aerospace leaders.*

*CAP is the volunteer, nonprofit auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force. Its three missions are to develop its cadets, educate Americans on the importance of aviation and space, and perform life-saving, humanitarian missions.*

*This guide provides an overview of the Cadet Program. To learn more, visit [cap.gov/cadets](http://cap.gov/cadets), or speak with your local squadron commander.*

# Overview of the Cadet Program

---

*To fulfill its goal of developing young people into responsible citizens and aerospace leaders, the Cadet Program is organized around five program elements. As cadets participate in these five elements, they advance through a series of achievements, earning honors and increased responsibilities along the way.*

*For more information about how cadets progress in CAP, see chapter two of CAP Regulation 52-16, Cadet Program Management, which is available at [cap.gov/cadets](http://cap.gov/cadets) and on The Next Step CD-ROM.*



*Cadets learn to lead and conquer challenges as a team.*

## Leadership

CAP introduces cadets to Air Force perspectives on leadership through classroom instruction, mentoring and hands-on learning. First, cadets learn to follow, but as they progress, they learn how to lead small teams, manage projects, think independently and develop leadership skills they can use in adult life.



*Where's the best place to study aerospace? The cockpit.*

## Aerospace Education

CAP inspires in youth a love of aviation, space and technology. Cadets study the fundamentals of aerospace science in the classroom, and experience flight first-hand in CAP aircraft. Summer activities allow cadets to explore aerospace career opportunities.



*When cadets function as a team, everyone runs faster.*



*Cadets don't just honor America, they solidify their character.*



*Summer activities are for making new friends and experiencing aerospace up-close.*

## Physical Fitness

CAP encourages cadets to develop a lifelong habit of regular exercise. The Cadet Program promotes fitness through calisthenics, hiking, rappelling, volleyball, competitions and other activities.

## Character Development

CAP challenges cadets to live the CAP core values of integrity, volunteer service, excellence and respect. Through character development forums, cadets discuss ethical issues relevant to teens. Chaplains often lead the discussions, but the forums are not religious meetings. CAP also encourages cadets to promote a drug free ethic in their schools and communities.

## Activities

CAP offers weekend and summer activities that allow cadets to fly, learn to lead, explore aerospace careers, assist in CAP's emergency services missions and make friends. During the Cadet Program's activities element, cadets have fun while applying what they have learned.

# Cadet Activities

---

## Weekly Squadron Meetings

Most squadrons meet weekly for two and one-half hours. When dropping off and picking up your son or daughter, please make a special effort to be on time.

While cadets are expected to participate actively in CAP, none of the meetings or events is mandatory. Of course, CAP believes that doing well in school is a cadet's first responsibility. If your son or daughter is unable to attend a weekly meeting or other activity, please let the squadron commander know in advance.

## Weekend & Summer Activities

There are many weekend and summer activities available to cadets at the local, state and national levels. Some activities have special eligibility requirements.

All cadets are encouraged to attend an encampment, where they can develop new leadership skills and explore aerospace careers. Most states host an annual summer encampment on a nearby military base. Encampments are overnight activities and typically are one week in duration.

Go to [cap.gov/cadets](http://cap.gov/cadets) for details about encampments and national cadet activities.



*The academically-rigorous Cadet Officer School introduces cadets to advanced concepts in leadership.*



*Many cadets receive their first flight in an airplane, thanks to CAP.*

## **Flying**

CAP's volunteer pilots share their love of flying with cadets. Through orientation flights in powered aircraft and gliders, cadets experience flight first-hand. While aloft, cadets handle the controls during the noncritical stages of the flight. CAP's pilots are licensed by the FAA, follow a syllabus for each flight and ensure the flight is conducted safely.

Cadets may also receive orientation flights in military aircraft. Orientation flights are free to cadets. For more information, go to [cap.gov/cadets](http://cap.gov/cadets).

## **Preparing for Bright Futures**

To help cadets plan for an exciting future, CAP offers college and flight scholarships on a competitive basis.

While they are not obligated to join the military, cadets who enlist in the Air Force can enter at a level higher than other recruits (E-3) if they earned the Mitchell Award as a cadet.

The service academies and ROTC also look favorably on CAP experience. About eight percent of Air Force Academy cadets are former CAP cadets. The Air Force Academy's Preparatory School sets aside at least one slot for CAP cadets annually.

See [cap.gov/scholarships](http://cap.gov/scholarships).

# Cadet Membership

---



*Wearing the Air Force uniform challenges cadets to a set high standards for themselves.*

## Membership Dues & Fees

Cadets' annual dues vary depending on their location. Additionally, cadets may be charged fees to cover meal and lodging costs at special activities. Because CAP is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization, membership dues, donations and other CAP-related expenses may be tax deductible.

## Member Kit

Shortly after joining CAP, each cadet will receive a Member Kit in the mail. The Member Kit includes cadet textbooks, a CD-ROM and other resources to help cadets get started in CAP.

## Uniforms

CAP promotes teamwork and high standards of personal conduct by having cadets wear a uniform.

New cadets may request a uniform through the Cadet Uniform Program (depending on availability of funds). See [cap.gov/cadets](http://cap.gov/cadets) for details.

---

## Adult Supervision

CAP takes its responsibility to safeguard youth very seriously. The adults who interact with cadets (known as CAP senior members) have been fingerprinted and screened by the FBI. Senior members supervise all cadet activities. During overnight activities, at least two senior members are present.

CAP does not tolerate sexual abuse, physical abuse, hazing or the use of exercise as punishment. All activities emphasize safety.

As part of their leadership training, advanced cadets mentor and lead new cadets under the guidance of senior members.

## Advancement

Cadets advance at their own pace through self-study and group study.

To progress, cadets must actively participate, pass written and performance tests and show they are ready to accept increased responsibilities.

If a commander believes a cadet is not ready to advance, he or she may retain them at their current level and counsel them to help them improve.

Cadets who earn the Mitchell Award may compete for scholarships. Cadets who earn the Earhart Award may apply for the International Air Cadet Exchange. See [cap.gov/cadets](http://cap.gov/cadets) for details.



*CAP's adult volunteers mentor cadets and show them the way.*

# Partnering with Parents

---

## An Invitation to Participate

Parents are welcome to observe all CAP activities. There are no secret meetings.

CAP can always use more adult volunteers. If you are willing to serve occasionally as a chaperone or driver, consider joining as a Cadet Sponsor Member. If you are interested in participating more fully in CAP's emergency services, aerospace education or cadet program missions, consider joining as a Senior Member. See [cap.gov/parents](http://cap.gov/parents) for membership information.

## Parents' Committee

Parents can support the cadets in their local squadron without officially joining CAP by serving on a parents' committee. Some of the ways parents can help include:

- asking area businesses to make financial or in-kind donations;
- organizing a carpool system;
- planning an awards night or pot luck dinner;
- helping the squadron connect with other local civic groups;
- serving as a guest speaker; or
- spreading the news about CAP and helping recruit new members.

## Open Communication

CAP wants to maintain open and ongoing communication with parents. Your son's or daughter's squadron commander will provide you with a phone roster listing all the adults who work with cadets, as well as a calendar of events.

## Cadets' Responsibilities

The Cadet Program is designed to instill in cadets a sense of personal responsibility and self-discipline. Cadets - not their parents - are responsible for preparing their uniform, planning ahead to juggle school and other obligations and signing up for special events.

## Addressing Concerns

As a parent, any time you have a question or concern, please contact the local squadron commander. CAP takes parents' concerns very seriously. If local leaders are unable to resolve an issue to your satisfaction, your wing headquarters will gladly address your concern. See [cap.gov/parents](http://cap.gov/parents) for contact information.

# Testimonials

---

**“I am pushing myself to be a better person. I never knew how much I could accomplish until I joined CAP.”**

*CADET KRISTIN MILLER  
Prairieville, La.*

**“I made my first solo flight at a CAP encampment.”**

*ASTRONAUT ERIC BOE  
Houston, Texas*



**“I may only be 12, but I take full pride when I am in my uniform.”**

*CADET LAUREN DURAY  
Hoffman Estates, Ill.*

**“I love the camaraderie and esprit de corps.”**

*CADET SAMANTHA VARNEY  
Boscawen, N.H.*

**“What really helped me become an Air Force fighter pilot was the discipline and leadership training I experienced in CAP.”**

*CAPT. JEFF PIXLEY, USAF  
Corona, Calif.*

**“My first CAP orientation flight was in a C-130. After that, I knew I wanted to fly C-130s for the Air Force. CAP opened a world of opportunities for me.”**

*CADET MICHAEL SMITH  
Camarillo, Calif.*

INTEGRITY • VOLUNTEER SERVICE • EXCELLENCE • RESPECT

Civil Air Patrol National Headquarters  
105 South Hansell St.  
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6332

---

First Class Mail  
Postage and  
Fees paid  
Montgomery, AL  
Permit # 700

**To the parents of:**

**Missions for America**